

# Fiji Hindi

**Fiji Hindi** or **Fijian Hindi** (Fiji Hindi: फिजी हिंदी), also known locally as simply **Hindustani**, is an Indo-Aryan language spoken by most Fijian citizens of Indian descent, though a few speak other languages at home.<sup>[1]</sup> It is an Eastern Hindi language, generally considered to be an older dialect of the Awadhi language spoken in central and east Uttar Pradesh that has been subject to considerable influence by Bhojpuri, Magahi and other Bihari languages. It has also borrowed some words from the English and Fijian languages. Many words unique to Fiji Hindi have been created to cater for the new environment that Indo-Fijians now live in.<sup>[3]</sup> First-generation Indians in Fiji, who used the language as a lingua franca in Fiji, referred to it as *Fiji Baat*, "Fiji talk". It is closely related to Caribbean Hindustani and the Hindustani language spoken in Mauritius and South Africa.

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<b>Fiji Hindi</b>	
	फिजी बात <i>Fiji Baat</i>
<b>Native to</b>	Fiji
<b>Ethnicity</b>	Indo-Fijians and the Indo-Fijian diaspora
<b>Native speakers</b>	(460,000 cited 1991) <sup>[1]</sup>
<b>Language family</b>	Indo-European <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Indo-Iranian</li> <li>▪ Indo-Aryan</li> <li>▪ Central</li> <li>▪ Eastern Hindi-Bihari</li> <li>▪ Awadhi and Bhojpuri</li> <li>▪ Fiji Hindi</li> </ul>
<b>Writing system</b>	Devanagari Latin Kaithi
<b>Signed forms</b>	Signed Hindi
<b>Official status</b>	
<b>Official language in</b>	 Fiji
<b>Language codes</b>	
<b>ISO 639-3</b>	hif
<b>Glottolog</b>	fiji1242 (http://glottolog.org/resource/language/oid/id/fiji1242) <sup>[2]</sup>

# History

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These are the percentages of each language and dialect spoken by indentured labourers who came to Fiji.

Language/Dialect	Number	Percentage
<i>Bihari dialects (Includes Bhojpuri, Maithili and Magahi)</i>	17,868	39.3%
<i>Eastern Hindi dialects (Awadhi)</i>	16,871	37.1%
<i>Western Hindi dialects (Dehlavi, Bundeli, etc...)</i>	6,903	15.2%
<i>Rajasthani dialects</i>	1,111	2.4%
<i>Dravidian languages (Tamil, Telugu, etc...)</i>	2,186	4.8%

Indian indentured labourers mainly spoke dialects from the Hindi Belt. Initially, the majority of labourers came to Fiji from districts of central and eastern Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, while a small percentage hailed from North-West Frontier and South India such as Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Over time, a distinct Indo-Aryan language with an Eastern Hindi substratum developed in Fiji, combining elements of the Hindi languages spoken in these areas with some native Fijian and English. The development of Fiji Hindi was accelerated by the need for labourers speaking different languages to work together and by the practice of leaving young children in early versions of day-care centers during working hours. Percy Wright, who lived in Fiji during the indenture period, wrote:

Indian children born in Fiji will have a mixed language; there are many different dialects amongst the Indian population, and of course much intercourse with the Fijians. The children pick up a little of each language, and do not know which is the one originally spoken by their parents.

— [4]

Other writers, including Burton<sup>[5]</sup> (1914) and Lenwood<sup>[6]</sup> (1917), made similar observations. By the late 1920s all Fiji Indian children born in Fiji learned Fiji Hindi, which became the common language in Fiji of North and South Indians alike.<sup>[7]</sup>

## Status

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Later, approximately 15,000 Indian indentured labourers, who were mainly speakers of Dravidian languages (Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Tulu, and Malayalam), were brought from South India. By this time Fiji Hindi was well established as the lingua franca of Indo-Fijians and the Southern Indian labourers had to learn it to communicate with the more numerous Northern Indians and their European overseers. After the end of the indenture system, Indians who spoke Gujarati and Punjabi arrived in Fiji as free immigrants. A few Indo-Fijians speak Tamil, Telugu, and Gujarati at home, but all are fluently conversant and able to communicate using Fiji Hindi. The census reports of 1956 and 1966 shows the extent to which Fiji Hindi (referred to as 'Hindustani' in the census) was being spoken in Indo-Fijian households.

<b>Pidgin Hindustani</b>	
<b>Language</b>	Fiji Hindi-based pidgin family
<b>Language codes</b>	
<b>ISO 639-3</b>	None (mis)
<b>Glottolog</b>	pidg1251 ( <a href="http://glottolog.org/resource/language/id/pidg1251">http://glottolog.org/resource/language/id/pidg1251</a> ) <sup>[8]</sup>

Language	Number of households in 1956	Number of households in 1966
Fijian Hindustani	17,164	30,726
Hindi	3,644	783
Tamil	1,498	999
Urdu	1,233	534
Gujarati	830	930
Telugu	797	301
Punjabi	468	175
Malayalam	134	47
Other	90	359

Fiji Hindi is also understood and even spoken by Indigenous Fijians in areas of Fiji where there are large Indo-Fijian communities. A pidgin form of the language is used by rural ethnic Fijians, as well as Chinese on the islands, while Pidgin Fijian is spoken by Indo-Fijians.

Following the recent political upheaval in Fiji, many Indo-Fijians have emigrated to Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the United States, where they have largely maintained their traditional Indo-Fijian culture, language, and religion.

Some writers have begun to use Fiji Hindi, until very recently a spoken language only, as a literary language. The Bible has now been translated into Fiji Hindi, and the University of the South Pacific has recently begun offering courses in the language. Fiji Hindi is written using both the Latin script and the Devanāgarī script.

A Fiji Hindi movie has also been produced depicting Indo-Fijian life and is based on a play by local playwright, Raymond Pillai.<sup>[9]</sup>

## Phonology

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The phonemes of Fiji Hindi are very similar to Standard Hindi, but there are some important distinctions. As in the Bhojpuri and Awadhi dialects of the Hindi Belt spoken in rural India, mainly Bihar and Eastern Uttar Pradesh — the consonant /ʃ/ is replaced with /s/ (for example, *saadi* instead of *shaadi*) and /ʊ/ replaced with /b/ (for example, *bid-es* instead of *videsh*). There is also a tendency to ignore the differences between the consonants /p<sup>h</sup>/ and /f/ (In Fiji Hindi a fruit is *fal* instead of *phal*) and between /dʒ/ and /z/ (in Fiji Hindi land is *jameen* instead of *zameen*). The consonant /n/ is used in Fiji Hindi for the nasal sounds /ŋ/, /ɳ/ and /ɳ/ in Standard Hindi. These features are common in the Eastern Hindi dialects.<sup>[10]</sup> Some other characteristics of Fiji Hindi which is similar to Bhojpuri and Awadhi are:

- Pronunciation of the vowels *ai* and *au* as diphthongs /eɪ eʊ/, rather than monophthongs /ɛ : ɔ :/ (as in standard Hindi). For example, *bhauji* (sister-in-law) and *gaiya* (cow).
- Coda clusters are removed with the use of epenthetic vowels. For example, *dharm* (religion) is pronounced as *dharam*.
- Shortening of long vowels before a stressed syllable. For example, *Raajen* (a common name) is pronounced as *Rajen*.<sup>[11]</sup>

## Pronouns

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Pronoun	Fiji Hindi	Standard Hindi
I	Hum	Main
You (Informal)	Tum	Tu/Tum
You (Formal)	Aap	Aap
We	Hum log	Hum/Hum log

## Morphology

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### Verb

#### Etymology

In Fiji Hindi verb forms have been influenced by a number of Hindi dialects in India. First and second person forms of verbs in Fiji Hindi are the same, there is no gender distinction and number distinction is only in the third person past tense. Although, gender is used in third person past tense by the usage of "raha" for a male versus "rahi" for a female.

The use of the first and second person imperfective suffixes *-taa*, *-at* are of Awadhi origin. Example: तुम मन्दिर जाता हैं / तुम मन्दिर जात हैं। "tum Mandir jaata hai/tum Mandir jaat hai." (You are going to the Temple).

While the third person imperfective suffix *-e* is of Bhojpuri origin. Example: ई बिल्ली मच्छरी खावे हैं। "Ee billi macchari KHAWE hai." (This cat is eating a fish).

The third person perfective suffixes (for transitive verbs) *-is* and *-in* are also derived from Awadhi. Example: किसान गन्ना काटीस रहा। "Kisaan ganna katees raha." (The farmer cut the sugarcane). पण्डित लोगन रामायण पढ़ीन रहा/पण्डित लोगन रामायण पढ़े रहीन। "Pandit logan Ramayan padheen raha/padhe raheen." (The priests read the Ramayana).

The third person definite future suffix *-ii* is found in both Awadhi and Bhojpuri. Example: प्रधानमंत्री हमलोग के पैसा दई। "Pradhanamantri humlog ke paisa daii" (The prime minister will give us money).

The influence of Hindustani is evident in the first and second person perfective suffix *-aa* and the first and second person future suffix *-ega*. Example: हम करा। तुम करेगा। "Hum karaa, tum karega." (I did, you will do).

The origin of the imperative suffix *-o* can be traced to the Magahi dialect. Example: तुम अपन मुह खोलो। "Tum apan muh khulo." (You open your mouth). Spoken in the Gaya and Patna districts, which provided a sizeable proportion of the first indentured labourers from Northern India to Fiji.

Fiji Hindi has developed its own polite imperative suffix *-naa*. Example: आप घर के सफा कर लेना। "Aap ghar ke sapha kar Lena." (You clean the house (polite)).

The suffix *-be*, from Bhojpuri, is used in Fiji Hindi in emphatic sentences.

Another suffix originating from Awadhi is *-it*. Example: ई लोगन पानी काहे नहीं पीत हैं। "Ee logan paani kahey nahi peet hai." (Why aren't these people drinking water.) but is at present going out of use.

### Tenses

Fiji Hindi tenses are relatively similar to tenses in Standard Hindi. Bhojpuri and Awadhi influence the Fiji Hindi tenses.

Sentence	Fiji Hindi	Standard Hindi
To come	आना Aana	आना (ānā)
Come!	आओ! Aao!	आओ! (āo!)
(I) am coming	हम आता हैं Ham aata hai	मैं आ रहा हूँ (māī ā rahā hū)
(I) came	हम आया रहा Ham aaya raha	मैं आया (māī āyā)
(I) will come	हम आयेगा Ham aayega	मैं आऊंगा (māī āūṅgā)
(I) was coming	हम आत (आवत) रहा Ham aat (aawat) raha	मैं आ रहा था (māī ā rahā thā)
(I) used to play	हम खेलत रहा Ham khelat raha	मैं खेला करता था (māī khelā kartā thā)
(He/she/they) is/are coming	ऊ आवे हैं / ऊ लोगन आत हैं oo aawe hai/oo logan aat hai	वो आ रहा है/वह आ रही है/वे आ रहे हैं (vo ā rahā hai/vah ā rahī hai/ve ā rahe hāī)
(He/she) came	ऊ आईस Oo Aais	वह आया/वह आई (vah āyā/vah āī)
(They) came	ऊ लोगन आईन Oo logan Aain	वे आये (ve āye)

## Grammatical features

- Fiji Hindi does not have plurals. For example, one house is *ek gharr* and two houses is *dui gharr*. In this example, the number is used to denote plurality. Plurals can also be stated with the use of *log*. For example, *ee* means "this person" (singular) and *ee log* means "these people" (plural). *Sabb* (all) and *dHerr* (many) are also used to denote plural. There are some exceptions, however. For example, a boy is *larrka* (single) but boys are *larrkan* (plural). Older generations still use a similar form of plural, for example, *admian*, for more than one man (singular: *admi*).
- There is no definite article ("the") in Fiji Hindi, but definite nouns can be made by adding the suffix *wa*; for example, *larrka* (a boy) and *larrkwa* (the boy). Definite nouns are also created using the suffix "kana"; for example, *chhota* (small) and *chhotkana* (the small one). Another way of indicating a definite article is by the use of pronouns: *ii* (this), *uu* (that) and *wahii* (the same one).

## Fijian loan words

Indo-Fijians now use native Fijian words for those things that were not found in their ancestral India but which existed in Fiji. These include most fish names and root crops. For example, *kanade* for mullet (fish) and *kumaala* for sweet potato or yam. Other examples are:

Fiji Hindi			
Latin Script	Devanāgarī Script	Fijian origin	Meaning
nangona	नंगोना	yaqona	<u>kava</u>
tabale	तबाले	tavale	wife's brother
bilo	बिलो	bilo	cup made of <u>coconut</u> , used to drink <u>kava</u>

# Words derived from English

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Many English words have also been borrowed into Fiji Hindi with sound changes to fit the Indo-Fijian pronunciation. For example, *hutel* in Fiji Hindi is borrowed from hotel in English. Some words borrowed from English have a specialised meaning, for example, *garaund* in Fiji Hindi means a playing field, *geng* in Fiji Hindi means a "work gang", particularly a cane-cutting gang in the sugar cane growing districts and *tichaa* in Fiji Hindi specifically means a female teacher. There are also unique Fijian Hindi words created from English words, for example, *kantaap* means cane-top.

## Semantic shifts

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### Indian languages

Many words of Hindustani origin have shifted meaning in Fiji Hindi. These are due to either innovations in Fiji or continued use of the old meaning in Fiji Hindi when the word is either not used in Standard Hindi anymore or has evolved a different meaning altogether.<sup>[12]</sup> Some examples are:

Fiji Hindi word	Fiji Hindi meaning	Original Hindustani meaning
<i>baade</i>	flood	flooding
<i>bekaar</i>	bad, not good, useless	unemployed, nothing to do, or useless
<i>bhagao</i>	elope	abduct
<i>bigha</i>	acre	1 <i>bigha</i> = 1600 square yards or 0.1338 hectare or 0.3306-acre (1,338 m <sup>2</sup> )
<i>bihaan</i>	tomorrow	tomorrow morning (Bhojpuri)
<i>Bombaiyaa</i>	Marathi/Gujaratis (Indians)	from city of <u>Mumbai</u>
<i>fokatiyaa</i>	useless	bankrupt
<i>gap</i>	lie	gossip, idle talk, chit chat
<i>jaati</i>	race	caste (more often misused/misunderstood as a term to reference a native Fijian)
<i>jhaap</i>	shed	temporarily built shed
<i>jor</i>	fast, quick	force, strength, exertion
<i>juluum</i>	beautiful	tyranny, difficulty, amazing (Hindustani <i>zalim</i> , meaning "cruel", is metaphorically used for a beautiful object of affection)
<i>kal</i>	yesterday	yesterday or tomorrow
<i>kamaanii</i>	small spear (for prawns)	wire, spring
<i>khassi</i>	male goat	castrated animal
<i>konchij</i>	what	from <i>kaun chij</i> (Awadhi), literally meaning <i>what thing</i> or <i>what stuff</i>
<i>maalik</i>	god	employer/owner or god
<i>Mandaraaji</i>	South Indian	original word, <i>Madraasi</i> , meant "from <u>Madras</u> (or Tamil Nadu)"
<i>palla</i>	door	shutter
<i>Punjabi</i>	Sikh	native of Punjab, whether Hindu, Muslim or Sikh

## English

Many words of English origin have shifted meaning in Fiji Hindi.

English word	Fiji Hindi meaning
purse	wallet
theatre	cinema
teacher	female teacher
engine	locomotive (in addition to usual vehicle/boat engines)
pipe	tap (faucet) (in addition to artificially made tubes)
cabbage	Chinese cabbage or bok choy
set	everything is ok (used as a statement or question)
right	ok (used as a statement)

## Counting

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Though broadly based on standard Hindi, counting in Fiji Hindi reflects a number of cross-language and dialectal influences acquired in the past 125 years.

The pronunciation for numbers between one and ten show slight inflections, seemingly inspired by Bihari dialects such as Bhojpuri. The number two, consequently, is दो (*do*) in standard Hindi, while in Fiji Hindi it is *dui* (दुइ), just as it is in Bhojpuri.

Words for numbers between 10 and 99 present a significant difference between standard and Fiji Hindi. While, as in other north Indian languages, words for numbers in standard Hindustani are formed by mentioning units first and then multiples of ten, Fiji Hindi reverses the order and mentions the tens multiple first and the units next, as is the practice in many European and South-Indian languages. That is to say, while "twenty-one" in Standard Hindi is इक्कीस (*ikkīs*), an internal sandhi of *ek aur biis*, or "one-and-twenty", in Fiji Hindi the order would be reversed, and simply be *biis aur ek* (बिस और एक), without any additional morpho-phonological alteration. Similarly, while the number thirty-seven in standard Hindi is सैंतीस (*saintīs*), for *saat aur tiis* or "seven-and-thirty", the number would be *tiis aur saat* (तिस और सात), or 'thirty-and-seven' in Fiji Hindi.

Additionally, powers of ten beyond ten-thousand, *lakh* (100,000) and *karor* (10 million) are not used in Fiji Hindi.

Numeral	English	Hindi	Fiji Hindi
21	twenty-one	इक्कीस (ikkīs)	bis aur ek
22	twenty-two	बाईस (bāīs)	bis aur dui
23	twenty-three	तेईस (teīs)	bis aur teen
31	thirty-one	इकतीस (ikattīs)	tiis aur ek
32	thirty-two	बत्तीस (battīs)	tiis aur dui
33	thirty-three	तैनीस (taintīs)	tiis aur teen
41	forty-one	इकतालीस (iktālīs)	chaalis aur ek
42	forty-two	बयालीस (bayālīs)	chaalis aur dui
43	forty-three	तैनालीस (taintālīs)	chaalis aur teen

## Spread overseas

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With political upheavals in Fiji beginning with the first [military coup in 1987](#), large numbers of Indo-Fijians have since migrated overseas and at present there are significant communities of Indo-Fijian expatriates in Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the United States. Smaller communities also reside on other [Pacific Islands](#) and [Britain](#). The last census in each of the countries where Fiji Hindi is spoken (counting Indo-Fijians who were born in Fiji) provides the following figures:

Country	Number of Fiji-born Indo-Fijians
Fiji	313,798 <sup>[13]</sup>
New Zealand	27,882 <sup>[14]</sup>
Australia	27,542 <sup>[15]</sup>
United States	24,345 <sup>[16]</sup>
Canada	22,770 <sup>[17]</sup>
Tonga	310 <sup>[18]</sup>

## Writers

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- **Rodney F. Moag**, who had lived in India before joining the University of the South Pacific as a lecturer. He analysed Fiji Hindi and concluded that it was a unique language with its own distinct grammar, rather than "broken Hindi", as it had been previously referred to. Moag documented his findings and wrote lessons using the Fijian Hindi dialect in the book, *Fiji Hindi: a basic course and reference grammar* (1977).
- **Jeff Siegel**, in his thesis on *Plantation languages in Fiji* (1985), has written a detailed account of the development of Fiji Hindi and its different forms as used by Indo-Fijians and Indigenous Fijians. Earlier, Siegel had written a quick reference guide called *Say it in Fiji Hindi* (1976).
- **Subramani**, professor in literature at the University of the South Pacific, who wrote the first Fiji Hindi novel, *Duaka Puraan* (2001), which is the story of Fiji Lal (an old villager) as told by him to a visiting scholar to his village. The book is written in the style of the *Puraans* but in a humorous way (*Puraan* being a sacred text also known as Purana; 18 Puraans have come out of India). He received a Government of India award for his contribution to Hindi language and literature

for this novel. In June 2003, in Suriname at the Seventh World Hindi Conference, Professor Subramani was presented with a special award for this novel.

- **Raymond C. Pillai** wrote the story for the first Fiji Hindi movie, *Adhura Sapna* (Incomplete Dream), produced in 2007.
- **Urmila Prasad**, who helped translate the Biblical Gospels of Mark, Luke, Matthew and John into Fiji Hindi, written using Roman script, known as *Susamaachaar Aur Romiyo* (2002)

## See also

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- [Girmityas](#), the descendants of late 18th and early 19th century labourers who were brought or emigrated to Fiji from India
- [Hindustani language](#)
- [Indo-Fijians](#)
- [Caribbean Hindustani](#)

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## External links

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- Fijian Hindi Dictionary (<https://www.webcitation.org/query?url=http://www.geocities.com/fijihindi/FijiHindiEnglishDict.htm&date=2009-10-25+22:09:42>)
- The first novel written in Fijian Hindi (<http://www.sidsnet.org/pacific/usp/journ/docs/news/wansolnews/wansol0711011.html>) (archive link (<https://web.archive.org/web/20070927015408/http://www.sidsnet.org/pacific/usp/journ/docs/news/wansolnews/wansol0711011.html>))
- Fijian Hindi version of the Gospels and Romans ([http://www.biblesociety.org/wr\\_370/370\\_04.htm](http://www.biblesociety.org/wr_370/370_04.htm))
- Adhura Sapna - Movie in Fijian Hindi (<https://web.archive.org/web/20080218032929/http://www.adhurasapna.com/>)
- Ghar Pardes - Another movie in Fijian Hindi, 2009 (<https://web.archive.org/web/20090704134049/http://www.gharpardes.com/>)
- Trailer of Ghar Pardes (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WA2qgwUK5VY&NR=1>)
- Fijian Hindi-to-Hindi Dictionary ([https://hi.wiktionary.org/wiki/Fiji\\_Hindi\\_to\\_Hindi\\_Dictionary](https://hi.wiktionary.org/wiki/Fiji_Hindi_to_Hindi_Dictionary))
- MyFijiGuide.com (<https://archive.is/20121208214721/http://myfijiguide.com/about-fiji/local-languages/popular-hindi-phrases.aspx>)
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